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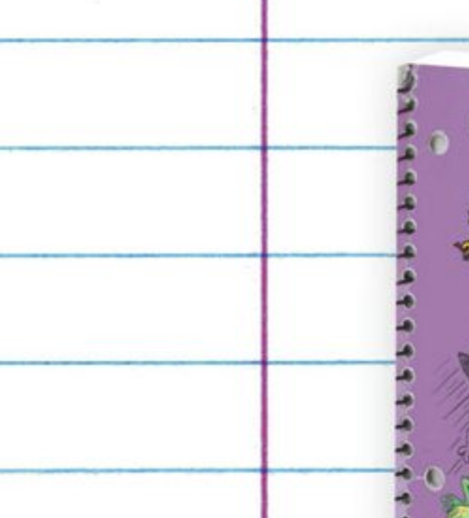
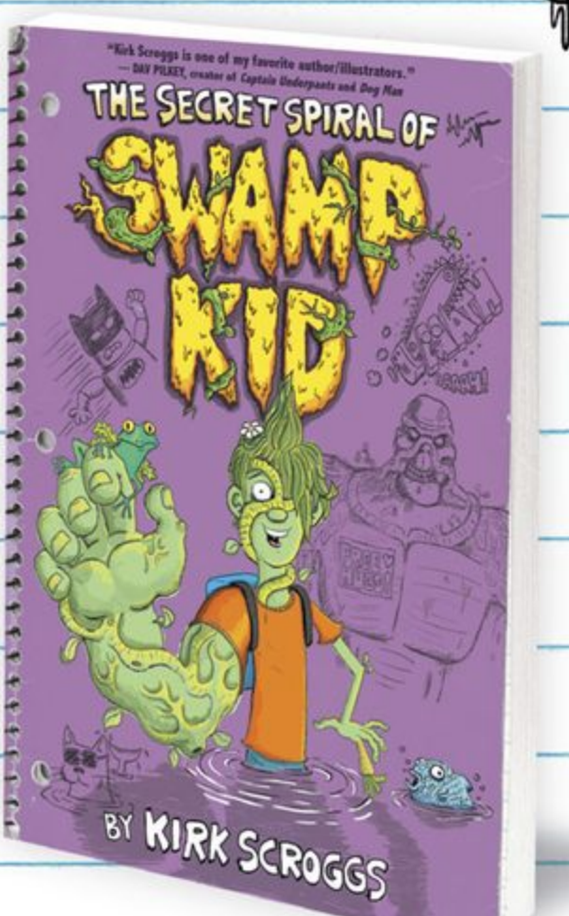
YEAR OF THE VILLAIN • DOOM RISING

Discover how I went from pond scum to hero!

THE SECRET SPIRAL OF SWAMP KID

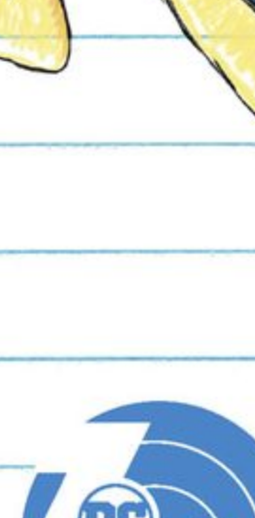
Hi, I'm Russell and I'm just a normal kid. Except I've got algae for hair, a tree trunk for a right arm, and a frog as one of my friends.




"Kirk Scroggs is one of my favorite author/illustrators."
— DAV PILKEY, creator of Captain Underpants and Dog Man
THE SECRET SPIRAL OF
SWAMP KID
BY KIRK SCROGGS

Written & Illustrated by

KIRK SCROGGS



SEPTEMBER

A new middle grade graphic novel

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Defeat at the Lazarus Pit...

HUFF HUFF

HUFF HUFF

HUFF

POOR THING...

...JUST LOOK AT YOU.

I HATE TO SAY THIS...

...BUT REALLY, YOU ONLY HAVE YOURSELF TO BLAME.

REMEMBER *YOU* ARE THE ONE WHO CAME TO *MY* CITY!

I COULD HAVE TURNED YOU OUT BUT INSTEAD OFFERED YOU A HAND IN FRIENDSHIP-- ONLY FOR YOU TO *REFUSE!*

SUCH A CLICHÉ, WOMEN FIGHTING ONE ANOTHER OVER A FEW SPOTS AT THE TOP.

YEAR ONE: THE VILLAIN...?

by JOËLLE JONES
colors LAURA ALLRED letters SAIDA TEMOFONTE
main cover JONES & ALLRED variant cover VIKTOR KALVACHEV
associate editor HARVEY RICHARDS editor JAMIE S. RICH

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT I GOT WHERE I AM BY DEFYING THE ODDS!

WHEN OPPORTUNITY CAME MY WAY, I GRABBED ON WITH BOTH HANDS...

...AND CHOKED IT TILL ITS EYES BLED!

RUUH!

RAHHH!

THAT IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS, MY DEAR!

ADAM, HONEY, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR NOW...

...I THINK SHE HAS LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON TODAY...

...NEVER @%$& WITH A QUEEN BEE!

WE SHOULD BE GOING. WE HAVE A TIGHT SCHEDULE TO KEEP.

=HUFF=

=HUFF=

Several weeks after the Lazarus Pit.

CRACKLIN' ROSIE...

RIDE TILL THERE AIN'T NO MORE...

...TAKING IT SLOW...

Ooto St

EXIT ONLY

50

...TO SING WHEN I WANT...

OH I LOVE MY ROSIE CHILD...

HAP

THE WAY TO MAKE ME HAP--

ZZZZT

HEY, WAIT UP!

OH GOD... PLEASE... NO...

HAPPY B DA

GABE

KNOCK KNOCK

ANYTHING BUT THIS.

YES! WHAT IS IT?

I, UH, I'M LOOKING FOR MR. GED--

HEY, GUYS, PARTY'S OUT BACK. YOU WANT--OH RIGHT! YOU MUST BE THE MAGICIAN'S ASSISTANT! COME ON IN, I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE HE'S SETTING UP.

NO, I'M NOT--

PLEASE EXCUSE THE MADHOUSE. I USUALLY HIRE OUT PARTY PLANNERS FOR THIS SORT OF THING...

OUTTA THE WAY, LADY!

HURRY UP!

...BUT MY HUSBAND THOUGHT I SHOULD TAKE A "MORE ACTIVE ROLE" IN OUR SON'S LIFE.

HA!

COME ON, WE'RE GOING TO MISS EVERYTHING!

WHOA!

MOM!

HONESTLY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE WAS EXPECTING. I'M NOT REALLY CUT OUT FOR THIS STUFF.

MOOOM!

I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE HIS FATHER EVER TAKES AN "ACTIVE ROLE."

MOMMA!

SOMETIMES I JUST WISH--

MOM!

MOM!

MOM!

SOMETIMES ...SIGH

HEY, CHECK THIS OUT...

MOTHER!

MOMMA!

MOMMA!

JEEZ, WHAT?!

UM UM UM UH...

CAN WE DO THE PIÑATAS NOW?

THIS IS EXACTLY-- WAIT!

YOU!

YOU GET YOUR GREASY FINGERS OUT OF THAT CAKE RIGHT THIS MINUTE!

YOU KIDS AND YOUR INTERNET! DON'T YOU KNOW IT ROTS THE IMAGINATION? COME ON, I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU THAT'LL KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF!

JACK GEDDES! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHAT?

WE'RE ABOUT TO START THE PIÑATA!

I GOT SOME IMPORTANT BUSINESS THINGS TO DO, GLORIA. JUST START WITHOUT ME, ALL RIGHT!

GAH, THAT WOMAN! I SWEAR SHE IS LURKING AROUND EVERY CORNER JUST TO CHAP MY HIDE!

YOU READY? TAKE A GANDER AT THIS!

ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I BOUGHT WITH MY OWN MONEY. AND TRUST ME, BACK THEN IT COST *QUITE* A PRETTY PENNY!

IT'S A PEN?

SURE, BUT IT'S GOT A SPECIAL FEATURE, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. *HEE-HEE!*

UH...

...I DON'T GET IT.

THAT'S 'CAUSE YOU GOTTA FLIP IT AROUND!

OH, RIGHT... HER SWIMSUIT DISAPPEARS.

HOW ABOUT THAT! PRETTY RACY STUFF, RIGHT?

SURE, BOSS, PRETTY RACY...

WHATCHA BOYS GOT THERE? CARE TO SHARE WITH THE CLASS?

WHAT THE--

WATCH OUT, BOSS! *GET DOWN!*

OH, SETTLE DOWN!

INCRAAC

AH!

RELAX, I ONLY CAME TO HAVE A FRIENDLY CHAT!

YOU TWO SEEM A BIT JUMPY, SO I'LL CUT TO THE CHASE. I WANT YOU TO TELL ME WHERE RAINA CREEL IS HIDING.

ONE...TWO... THREE!

R-RAINA C-C-C--

ME?

WELL, I DON'T KNOW, I JUST WORK HERE, PLEASE--

SMACK

YAAAAH!

CRACK

YAY! WHOOOO!

SHOCK

I SWEAR TO YOU, NO ONE HAS SEEN HER FOR *WEEKS!*

=HUGK=

IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, MR. GEDDES, YOU ONLY HAVE TO STOP LYING TO ME.

I'M NOT, HONEST!

SHOCK

=BRRFT=

I REALLY DO HATE REPEATING MYSELF.

SHOCK

ALL RIGHT, WE CLEARLY NEED A NEW APPROACH. YOU'RE A BUSINESSMAN--OF SORTS--SO I'D LIKE TO CREATE A WIN-WIN SCENARIO FOR YOU.

IF YOU TELL ME WHERE RAINA IS, I WIN.

I TOLD YA--

KRACK

AHH!

YOU STOP FEEDING ME LIES, AND I WON'T FEEL THE NEED TO HIT YOU. *THAT'S* A WIN FOR YOU. DEAL?

I JUST THINK--

I'LL TAKE THAT AS A NO.

WHOO

WOCK

YAYAY!

...WELL, THAT WASN'T SO HARD AFTER ALL, WAS IT, MR. GEDDES?

I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I REALLY DO APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION IN THIS MATTER!

OH, AND JUST ONE MORE THING.

IF YOU SEE RAINA BEFORE I DO...

...TELL HER I'M COMING FOR HER.

CARLOS? YOU STILL THERE?

YEAH. BIT HARSH, DON'T YOU THINK?

OH, COME ON, HE SECRETLY LOVED IT. BUT IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER, I PROMISE TO BE GENTLER NEXT TIME. YOU GET ALL OF IT?

I GOT IT, BUT, SELINA...YOU SHOULD COME HOME. MAGGIE--

I WILL, BUT AFTER THIS NEXT ONE. I'M GETTING SO CLOSE!

BUT--

GOTTA GO, BUT I'LL CHECK IN AS SOON AS I CAN!

PLAY IT NOW, MY BABY...

?

...

GASP

After the defeat at the Lazarus Pit.

Creel mansion, before the Pit.

THE WORLD IS HEADING FOR A BIG CHANGE.

ARE YOU DONE PLAYING GAMES? ARE YOU READY TO ACCEPT WHO YOU ARE?

BECAUSE I HAVE SOMETHING TO HELP WITH THAT.

REALLY, LEX? I NEVER HAD YOU PEGGED AS THE HELPFUL TYPE. BUT YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY, AND I MUST ADMIT...YOU HAVE ME CURIOUS.

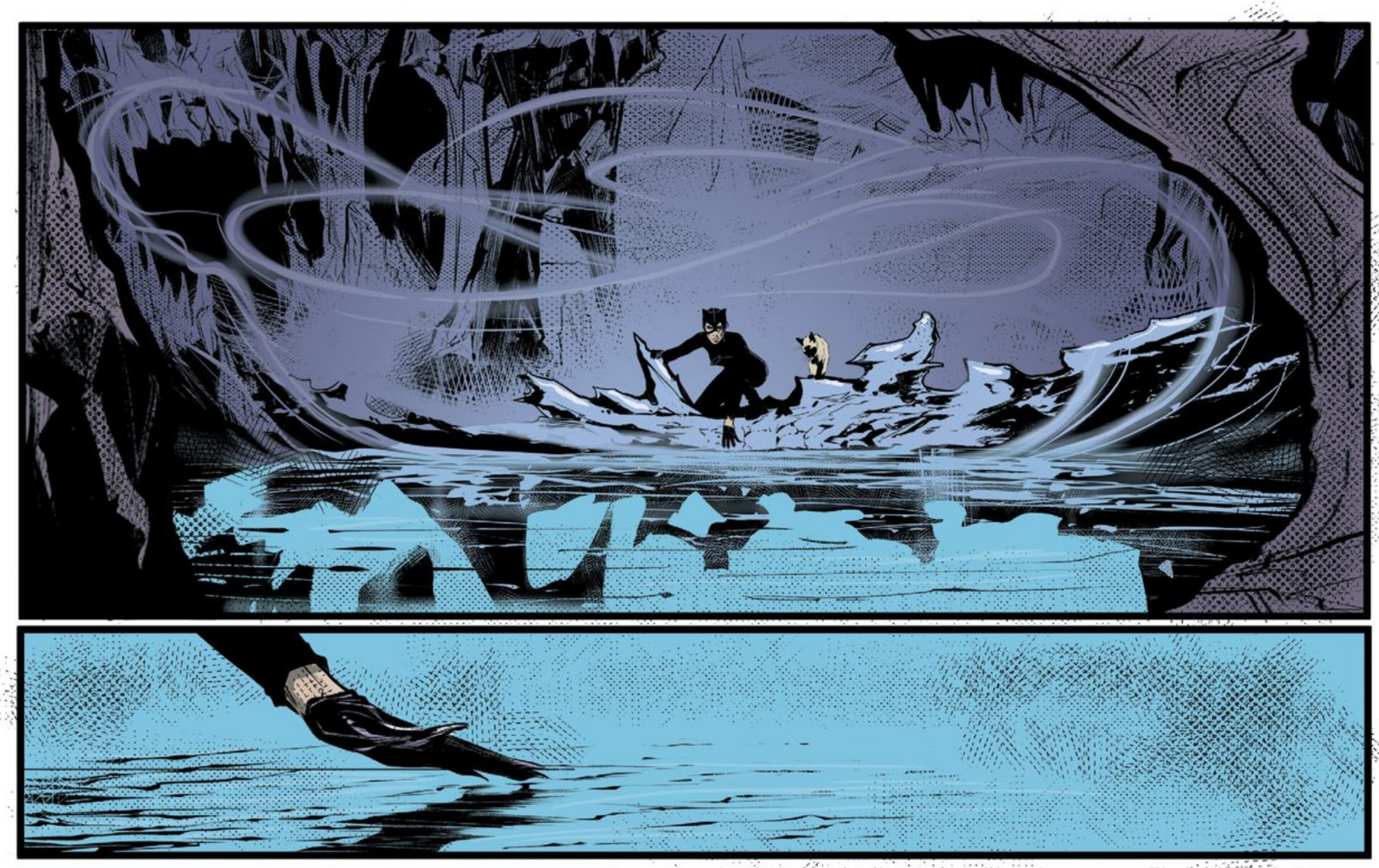
POURING HONEY IN YOUR EAR NEVER DID GET ANYONE VERY FAR SO I WON'T GIVE YOU THE HARD SELL.

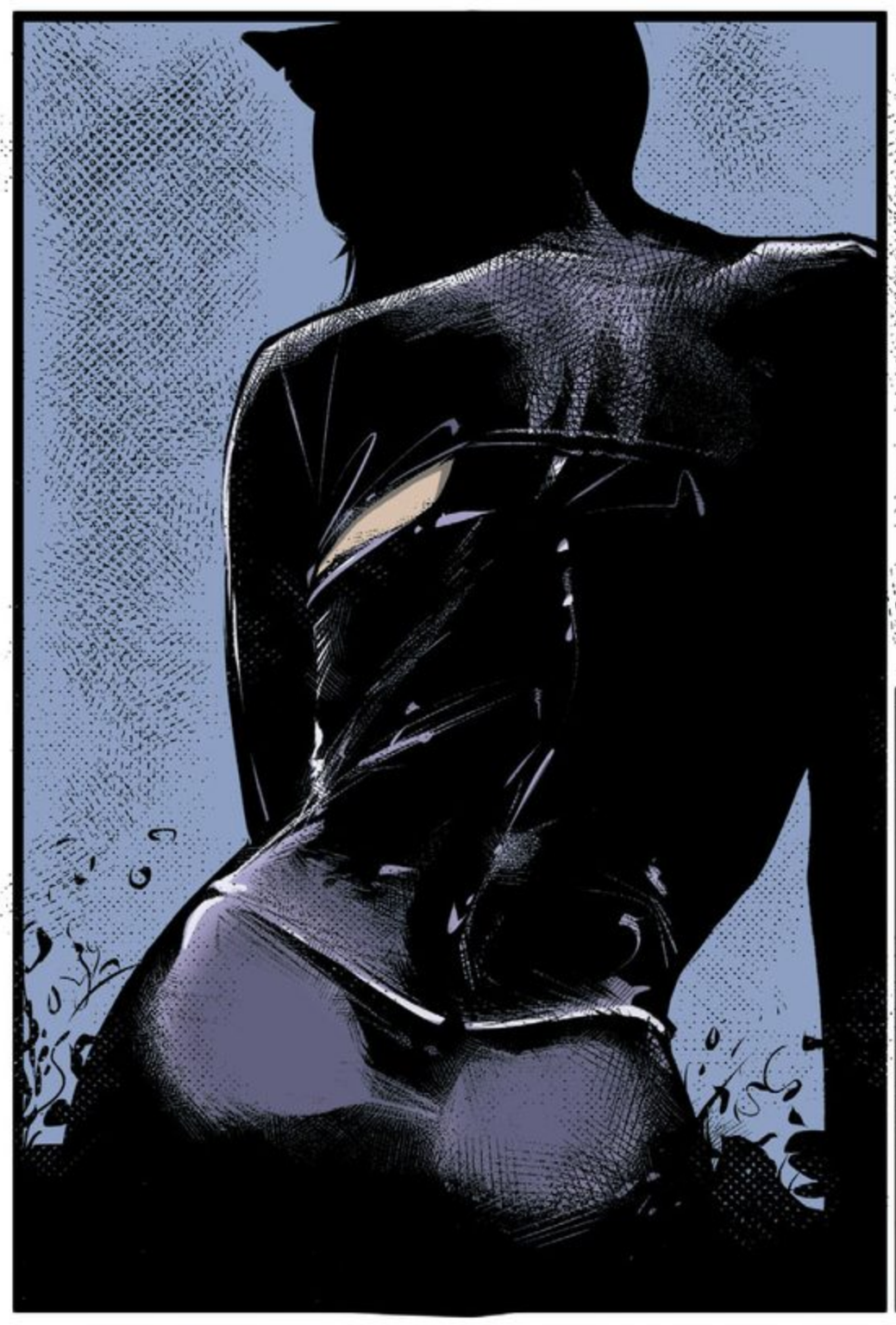
I AM HERE TO OFFER YOU A CHANCE FOR A GREATER PURPOSE IN YOUR LIFE.

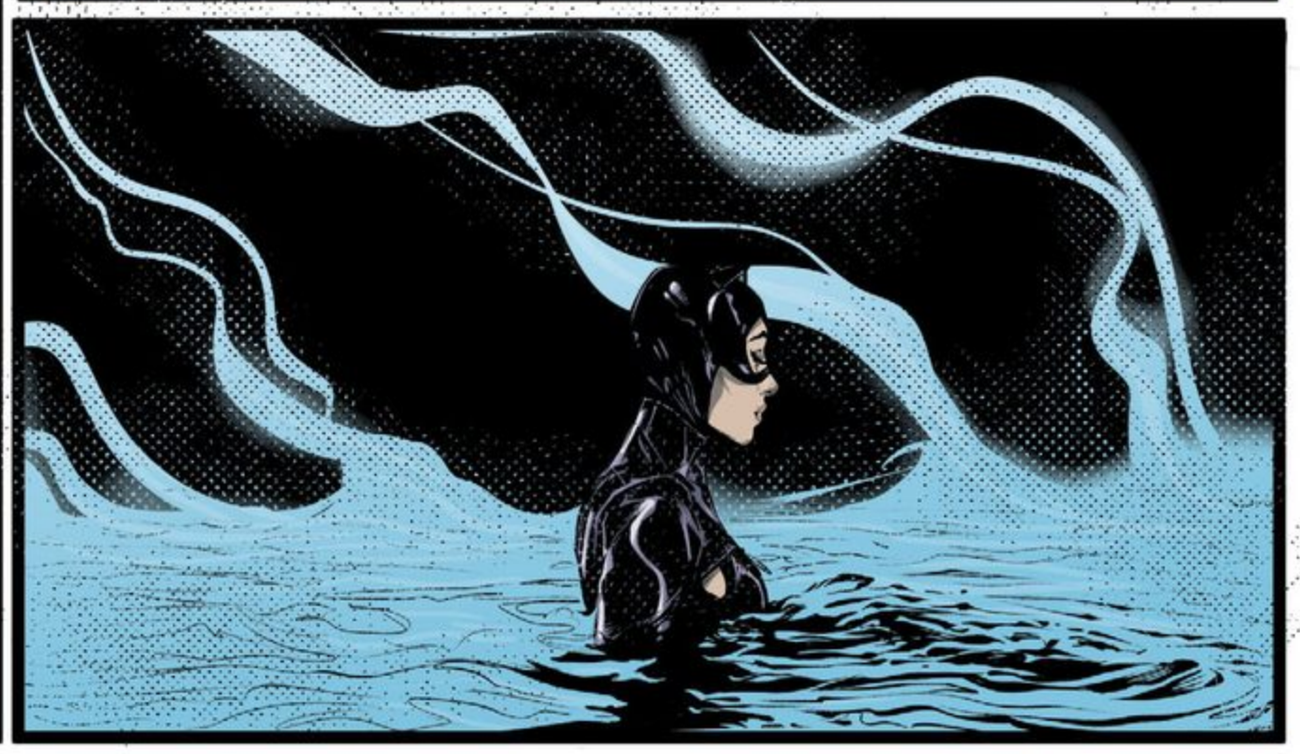
A CHANCE TO RESHAPE THE PAST AND SHOW THE WORLD YOUR TRUE SELF.

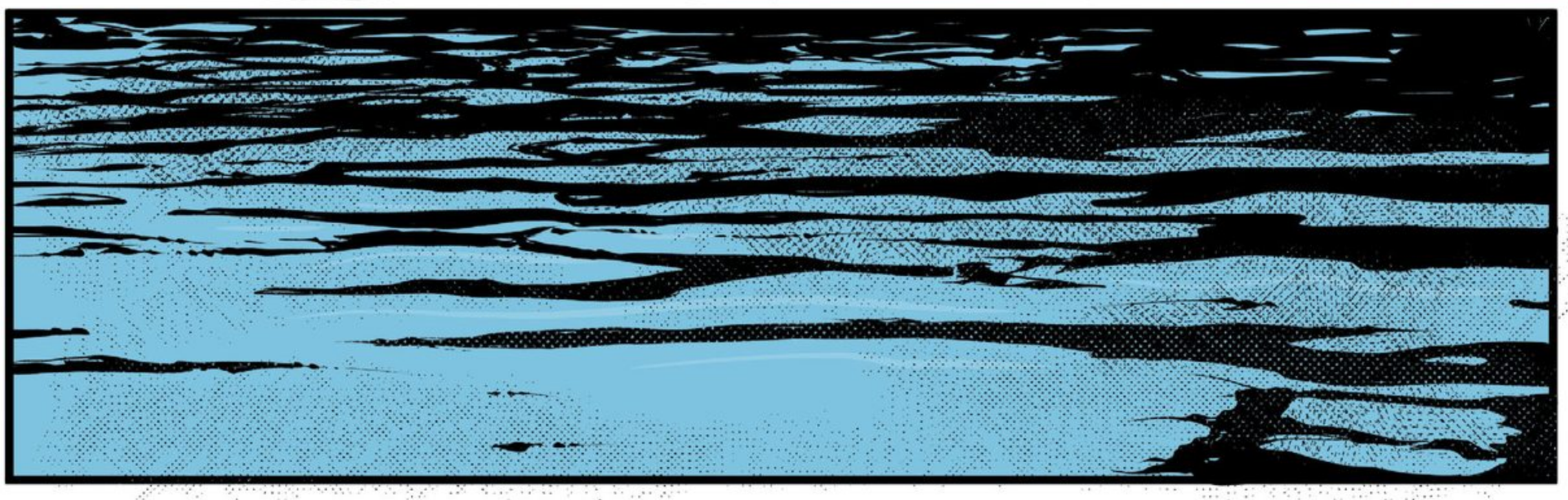
WHAT WILL IT BE, CATWOMAN-- HERO OR VILLAIN?

After the defeat at the Lazarus Pit.









Villa Hermosa.

HELL?

next: HOSTILE TAKEOVER

Best Comic Book – 21st Annual GLAAD Media Awards

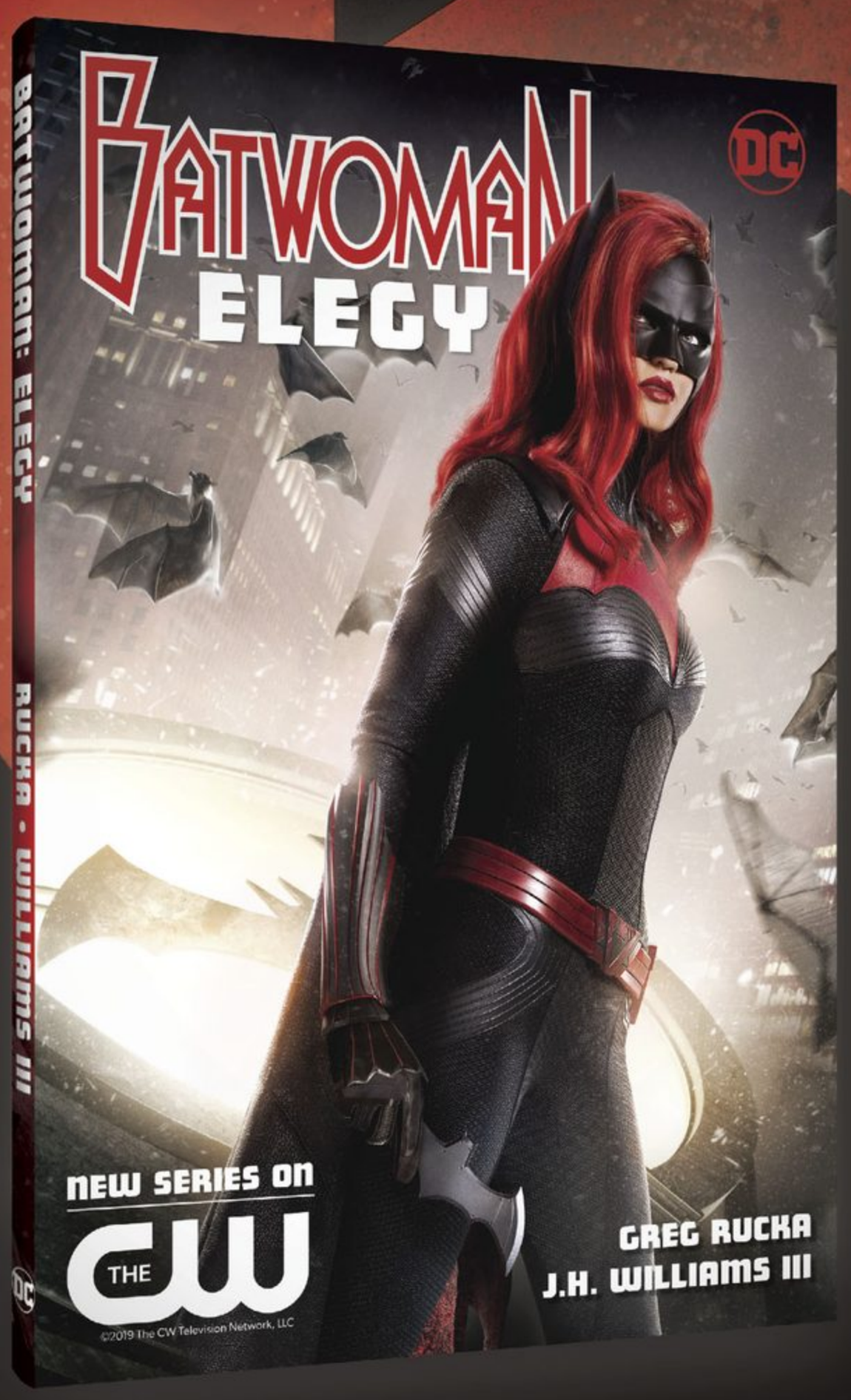
THE HERO WE NEED IS HERE!

"INCREDIBLE."
—THE A.V. CLUB

"GORGEOUS."
—IGN

Written by
GREG RUCKA

Illustrated by
J.H. WILLIAMS III



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A DC NATION INTERVIEW

JOKER: KILLER SMILE

JOKER: KILLER SMILE **invites readers to an all-new and truly terrifying look at Batman's archenemy. Writer JEFF LEMIRE and artist ANDREA SORRENTINO discuss taking on The Joker, and the descent into madness awaiting Arkham Asylum psychotherapist Dr. Ben Arnell.**

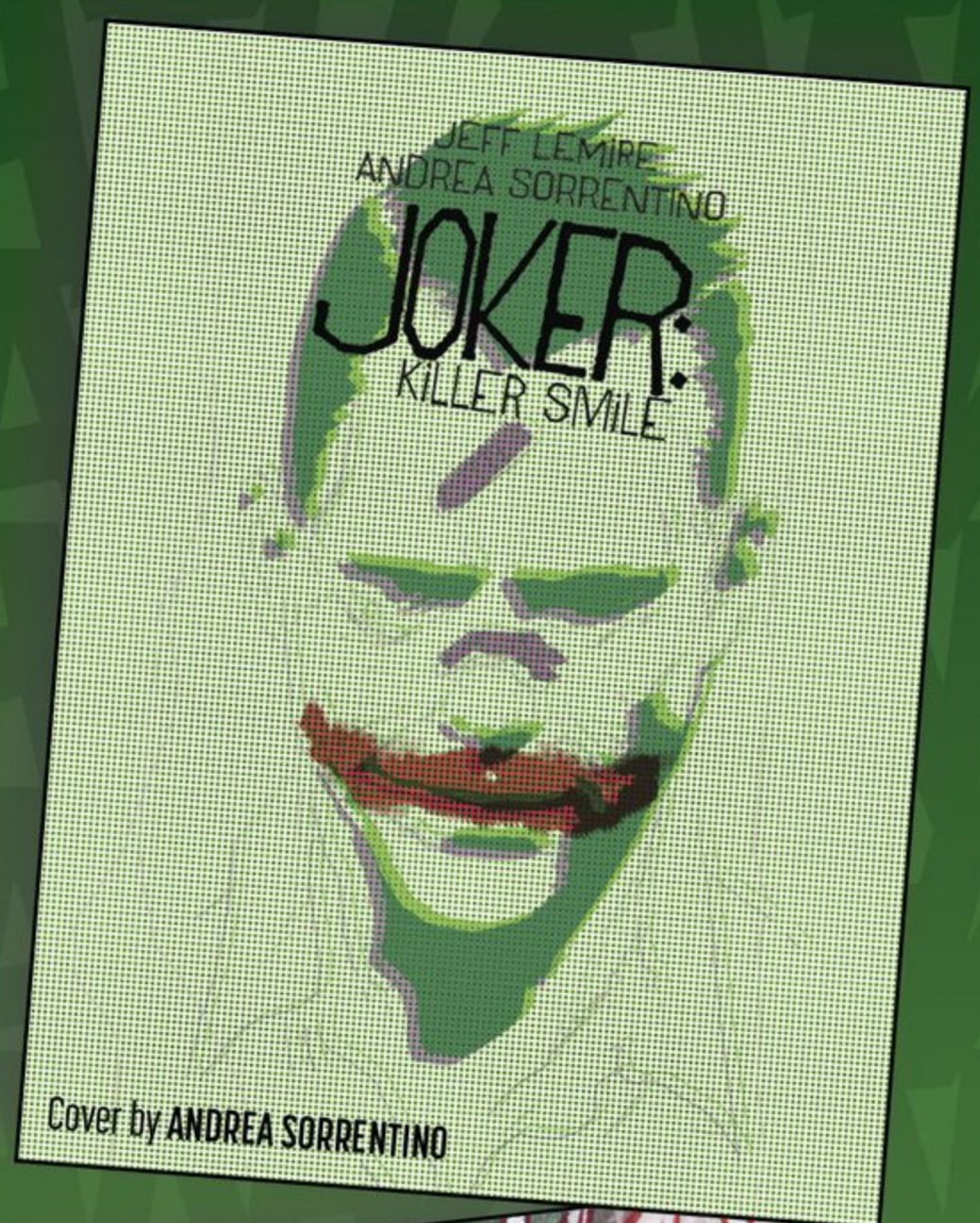
What aspects of The Joker did you want to explore? What shaped your take on him?

JEFF LEMIRE: I've written a lot of the DC Universe in the past, but I have never really had a chance to write any of the Batman-related characters, so this opportunity was very exciting for me. Aside from Batman himself, of course, The Joker is probably the most iconic character in that corner of DC. But I didn't really feel intimidated by it, really just excited to try and do something new and fresh and put our own spin on The Joker, while still celebrating all the great stories that have come before.

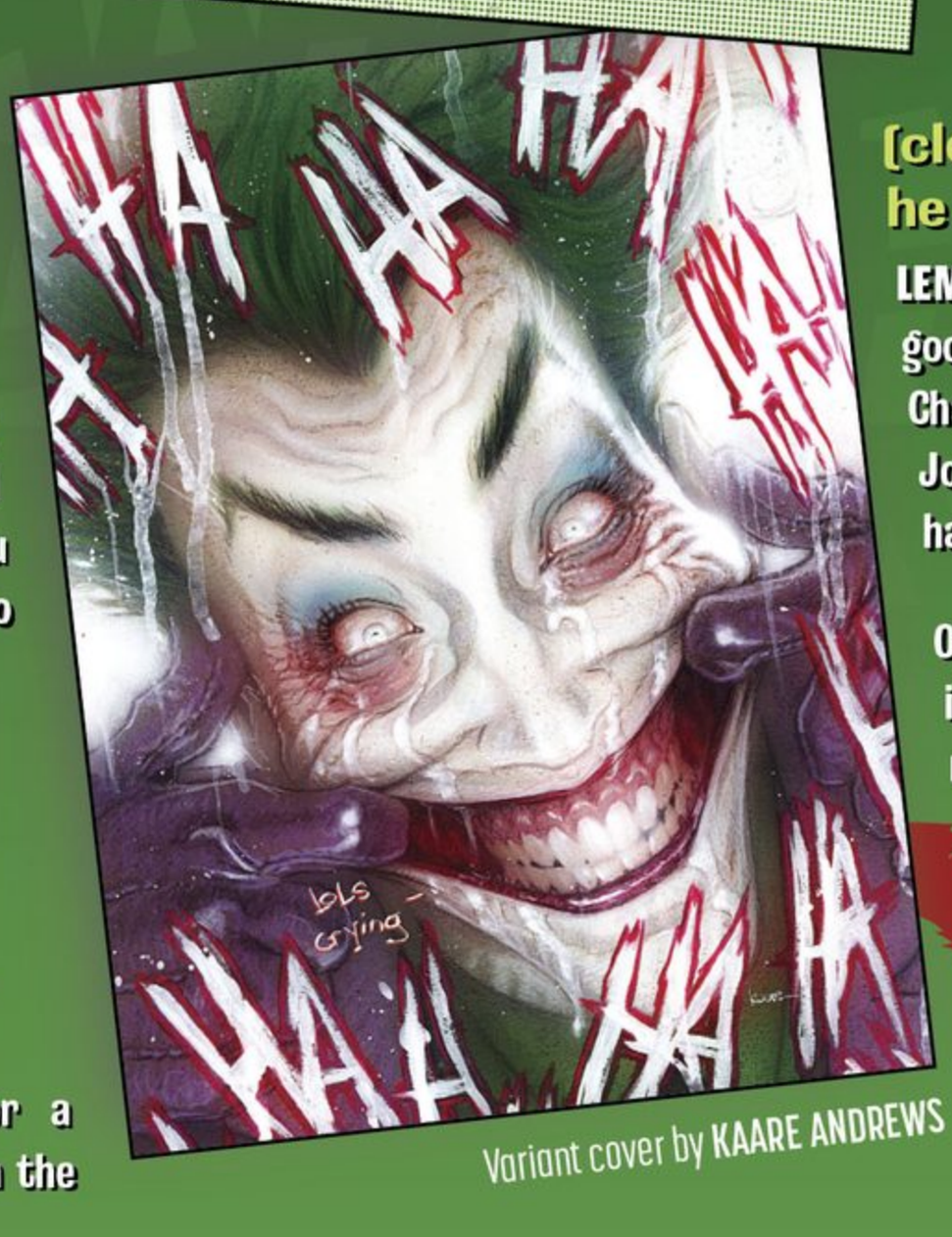
ANDREA SORRENTINO: We wanted to show a man who can crawl under your skin and walk into your mind just by using his words. Like that kind of psychopath who can freak you out even while he's handcuffed to a chair from behind glass.

How do you describe the visual tone of the series? What type of mood are you looking to establish?

SORRENTINO: We're aiming for a real take on the character. Even the Gotham or the Arkham Asylum we see in the book are stripped of their usual gothic aesthetic to show themselves as real places.



Cover by ANDREA SORRENTINO



Variant cover by KAARE ANDREWS

And the story is really a crescendo. We see madness growing and growing through the issues.

Do other familiar characters beyond The Joker play a part in *Killer Smile*?

LEMIRE: They sure do. You can't have Joker without his favorite dancing partner, can you? But The Joker is the focus of this book. Any other DC characters are there in support of telling a really great Joker story.

Let's talk about Dr. Ben Arnell—how is he so (clearly misguidedly) confident he can diagnose The Joker?

LEMIRE: Ben is a great guy. Nothing wrong with good ol' Ben Arnell. He'll be totally fine, I promise. Chances are good Ben will succeed in treating The Joker's madness, and the story will have a very happy ending for all. Really.

Or...Dr. Ben Arnell could be the reader's gateway into terror and insanity, and a whole world of mayhem like nothing Gotham has ever seen.

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